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## UK drivers heading across the Channel in the dark about French driving rules and regulations

**UK drivers heading to France this summer risk rousing the suspicions of the gendarmes by being in the dark about a range of French driving rules, new research conducted for [RAC European Breakdown](#)\* suggests.**

Six-in-10 drivers who take their own cars or motorbikes abroad (63%) are not aware tailgating is illegal in France, as it is in the UK, while half (49%) do not know that the only legal way of using a handheld mobile phone in the country is to park up in a designated parking place and switch the engine off. Just 38% of drivers know the distracting practice of using headphones or earphones while behind the wheel is illegal.

Meanwhile only half of drivers (49%) know they have to pay a mandatory recovery fee should they break down on a French motorway, with just one in six of these (15%) aware that the fee has gone up to at least €126 per breakdown this year – a cost which rises overnight and during weekends. Depending on their breakdown provider and level of cover, drivers can claim this fee back once they are back in the UK.

Reassuringly however, the vast majority of UK drivers heading over the Channel (93%) say they do the right thing and buy European breakdown cover before they go away.

Drivers were also asked about their awareness of new speed cameras that are being rolled out across France this year. Despite an understandably low 14% of drivers saying they are currently aware of the new '[Mesta Fusion](#)' cameras, those heading abroad will need to familiarise themselves with them, not

least because in the future they may be used by the French authorities to catch drivers tailgating, driving in a bus lane or on a hard shoulder and even using a mobile phone illegally.



[Watch video on YouTube here](#)

**RAC Europe spokesman Rod Dennis said:**

“With thousands of UK drivers taking their own cars – and motorbikes – to France in the coming weeks, it can be easy to forget that certain driving conventions can be quite different to those this side of the Channel.

“Breaking down on a French motorway, for instance, results in a driver having to pay a mandatory fee to have their vehicle recovered, before a breakdown assistance company can come to help – a very different experience to here in the UK. So it’s important UK drivers check their breakdown policy covers them before they leave home.

“Luckily, the vast majority of drivers say they have European breakdown cover in place before they leave – which is just as well, as a good policy is vital in helping drivers out of a sticky situation should they be unlucky enough to suffer a breakdown away from home.”

The RAC provides the best level of European breakdown cover available on the market, with its [Comprehensive Plus product](#).\*\* It is the only product that covers all the costs to bring a broken-down vehicle back to the UK (as long as it’s not beyond economical repair) and gives drivers more to spend on a hire

car and accommodation that any other provider.

*The RAC has published a checklist for drivers on [what they need to know before taking their own vehicle over the Channel](#) this summer. A range of [country-specific driving guides](#) is also available.*

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## **Notes to Editors**

\* Source: RAC Opinion Panel survey conducted June 2019 with people who to take their own transport to/from the UK to continental Europe

\*\* Comparison based on RAC Comprehensive Plus European Breakdown cover against the top level of cover from other major providers as of 05.02.2019. For full details visit [www.rac.co.uk/eurocompare](http://www.rac.co.uk/eurocompare)

## **About the RAC**

First formed in 1897, the RAC has been looking after the needs of its members for more than 120 years.

Today it has approximately 10m members and is one of the UK's most progressive motoring organisations, providing services for both private and business motorists. Whether it's [roadside assistance](#), [insurance](#), [buying a used car](#), [vehicle inspections and checks](#), [legal services](#) or up-to-the-minute [traffic and travel information](#) – the RAC offers a solution for all motoring needs. The RAC is committed to making motoring easier, safer, more affordable and more enjoyable for drivers and road users.

The RAC supports the interests of its members and UK drivers at a national level. This includes voicing concerns about the increasing cost of motoring, particularly the price of fuel and the high level of tax levied on it, advancing levels of road safety, and supporting the needs of all drivers, from young to old.

The RAC's annual [Report on Motoring](#) – first published in 1989 – is one of a kind and provides a clear insight into the concerns and issues facing today's motorists.

For the very latest news on UK fuel prices, check [RAC Fuel Watch](#). It provides a comprehensive guide to the latest UK unleaded petrol and diesel prices – both at the wholesale level and at the pump - and tracks these prices daily to help drivers check if the price they pay to fill up is a fair one.

For more information about the RAC, visit the [RAC website](#).

## Contacts



### **RAC Press Office**

Press Contact

[press.office@rac.co.uk](mailto:press.office@rac.co.uk)

Emails monitored during normal office hours. For breakdown queries, call 0330 159 0740

ISDN number on request